

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 6 are amended; and claims 10-25 are canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter contained therein. No new matter is added. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representative by Examiner MacArthur in the August 3 personal interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

I. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 6 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,529,657 to Ishii; rejects claims 1-3, 6, 7 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,391,787 to Dhindsa et al. (Dhindsa); rejects claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,748,434 to Rossman et al. (Rossman) in view of Ishii; rejects claims 4 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ishii or Dhindsa; and rejects claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Dhindsa or Ishii in view of Dhindsa.* These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 1 and 6 are amended to recite, *inter alia*, that a first portion "being in direct contact with plasma" and "the first portion and the second portion are of a monolithic piece of the quartz ring, and wherein the quartz ring surrounds a wafer holder." Support for the amendment can be found in the specification at, for example, paragraphs [0037], [0044], [0046], [0052] and [0203] and Figs. 1, 2B and 2C.

As discussed during the August 3, 2007 personal interview, the passage of Rossman relied on by the Office Action for disclosing the shield 5 as shown in Fig. 4 shows a quartz

* It is Applicants' understanding that the Office Action actually rejects claim 5 over Dhindsa or Ishii in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0139478 to Ma et al. (Ma).

ring comprised of rings 60 and 62 (see page 3, lines 8-9 of the Office Action). However, Rossman fails to teach or disclose that the first and the second portion are of a monolithic piece of the quartz ring and the first portion is in direct contact with plasma.

The passage of Ishii relied on by the Office Action for disclosing the quartz ring fails to teach or suggest that the first and second portion are of a monolithic piece of quartz ring.

The passage of Dhindsa relied on by the Office Action (see page 2, lines 19-20) for disclosing a quartz ring 11 integral to/located around the showerhead electrode 10 merely shows that the upper electrode 10 is a one-piece monolithic electrode with an integral step 11 (see col. 7, lines 31 and 32 of Dhindsa). However, Dhindsa fails to teach or suggest that the quartz ring surrounds a wafer holder. Thus, Dhindsa fails to teach or disclose the quartz ring of the present application.

Ishii, Dhindsa and Ma fail to cure the deficiencies of Rossman; and Rossman, Ishii and Ma fail to cure the deficiencies of Dhindsa. Accordingly, the applied references, alone or in any combination, fail to teach or suggest the recited features of independent claims 1 and 6.

For at least these reasons and as acknowledged during the August 3, 2007 personal interview, independent claims 1 and 6 and the claims dependent therefrom, are patentable over the applied references. Withdrawal of the rejection of the claims is respectfully requested.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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